

IN THE CLAIMS:

Entry of the following amendments to the claims is respectfully requested:

1. (currently amended) A process for sterilizing objects in a sterilization chamber in which a vacuum prevails, in which sterilization chamber a vapor mix consisting of water steam and hydrogen peroxide steam is fed rapidly expanded without the use of carrier gas such that the vapor mix cools to below the hydrogen peroxide dew point, the said vapor mix being deposited in the form of a condensate layer abruptly on the surfaces of the objects to be sterilized and on the surfaces of the sterilization chamber, wherein expanding and condensing the vapor compound takes place within several tenths of a second to up to a few seconds, wherein the condensate layer is heated up by the released evaporation enthalpy, and wherein the condensate layer is subsequently sucked out immediately thereafter by further evacuation of the sterilization chamber, wherein at least one of the surfaces of the objects to be sterilized and the sterilization chamber are pre-heated to a pre-determined temperature.

2. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the surfaces are pre-heated by means of installed heating devices.

3. (currently amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the surfaces are pre-heated with warm air, a temperature of said warm air being set to maintain a homogeneous temperature condition in the sterilization chamber.

4. (previously presented) A process according to claim 3, wherein a regulated sterile air current supplies the warm air.

5. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the entire sterilization chamber is pre-heated.

6. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein individual areas of the sterilization chamber are intentionally pre-heated.

7. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the objects are pre-heated before they are guided into the sterilization chamber.

8. (currently amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein the objects are subject to a hot air current after the condensate layer has been sucked out, a temperature of said hot air being set above a temperature of the objects following removal of the condensate layer.